

BOOK REVIEWS



IN CHARGE OF

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HEALTH. A Twentieth Century Treatise on Health Based on Anatomy and Physiology of the Human Body, Together with First Aid to the Sick or Injured, and Including Care of Children, Midwifery, Surgical Diseases, Nursing and Treatment. Chief Author, Prof. D. G. Revell, M.D.; Late of the Medical Department of the University of Chicago; Government Bacteriologist, N. W. T., Canada. Assisted by an able staff of Physicians. 2 Volumes. Fully Illustrated. The Medical Publishing Co., Chicago.

WHEN the average reader has finished the perusal of this long and diffuse title the chances are that he or she will feel that he has been over a good bit of ground and that it is time for rest and recreation. "Twentieth Century" the book may be, but surely it is a twentieth century survival of a good many centuries earlier. It is hard to comprehend just why such a book should be offered to the public, under the auspices of the medical profession. The author professes to believe that its study will not mislead the reader into attempting any self treatment. This belief may be founded on carefully tested experiment, but truly it would seem more expeditious to telephone fifty miles for a doctor than to search out one's own particular symptoms in the thirteen hundred and fifty odd pages.

The author advises as follows: "The Treatise of Health is meant for the non-medical reader originally and is as free as possible from technical or unnecessary detailed matter such as is of use only to the doctor. But the reader must study it, thoughtfully and critically, often with the dictionary in hand—he should become a student in using it, and be more intelligent, better educated, and a better thinker for having read it; just as anyone is who uses a valuable book rightly. He should be helped by it to rid himself of many errors and wrong ideas and of much ignorance."

We naturally agree to these sentiments, but a little later we read "Ignorance invites and fosters fraud, imposition and quackery." Is not the use of such a book as the Treatise of Health, for the diagnosis and

treatment of disease, quackery? Again, the author says: "A properly qualified doctor spends years in hard study and careful training under good teachers, and has the benefit of a large experience. We should not hesitate to avail ourselves of the benefit of his wisdom and help." But does not the recommendation of the "Treatise of Health" offer an alternative of even superior advantages? Why send for a doctor if one has under his hand the condensed knowledge and experience of the profession?

The author announces that our present age, this twentieth century, is to "stand pre-eminent and notable in that the non-professional people shall learn the nature of disease and how to avoid it." On page 386, Volume II, we find the following: "The microbe theory of disease has become a popular faith. Thousands of persons keep themselves and all about them in constant agitation in order to avoid the microbes which they imagine are the cause of consumption, pneumonia, influenza, and even common colds. Of course it is true that various diseases are conveyed by the minute organisms known as microbes or bacteria. Yet knowledge of this fact does not save people from disease." If bacteria are not to exist for the laity why mention them at all; and if the layman does not believe in the presence of bacteria why should he be asked to use one of the many formulæ for disinfecting purposes given in another part of the book?

A careful study of the book leaves the reviewer with the unwelcome impression that it is no different from others of its type offered to the gullible public from time to time—a great, windy, wordy, catch penny piece of work—and it is very hard to believe that it is offered in good faith by its author.

CHASING THE CURE IN COLORADO. By Thomas Crawford Galbreath.

THIS little book, merely a pamphlet, has reached its third edition and it well deserves to be sent speeding on its way; there are still vast numbers of people ignorant of the plain and common-sense hints embodied in it, who need to be told again and yet again that the most important agents for the "cure" are in our own hands if we will only rid ourselves of ancient and misleading notions about drafts and night-air and cold water, etc., etc. The book is primarily an account of the author's experience in looking for health in the West, where the conditions of climate invite so many to leave their homes in the East in the hope of regaining lost health. The author found conditions in the West by no means entirely *couleur de rose*, and it is almost impossible to credit his account of the inhumanity of the natives of this Western